

1582 (4)


THE
HISTORY OF
DICK WHITTINGTON,
LORD MAYOR OF LONDON;

With the Adventures of his

CAT.



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Sir Richard Whittington,

AND HIS CAT.

DICK WHITTINGTON was but a very little boy when his father and mother died, indeed so young that he knew neither of them, nor the place he was born in. After strolling about the country, as ragged as a colt, for a long time, he met with a waggoner, going to London, who gave him leave to walk all the way by the side of his waggon without paying a farthing for his passage, which very much pleased little Whittington, for he sadly wanted to see London; as he had heard the streets were paved with gold, his intention was to get a hat full: but how great was his disappointment to find the streets covered with dirt, and himself



without food, friends, money, or any person to give him a character.

In this situation, Dick asked charity of several people, and, at length, half dead for want of food, he laid himself down at the door of Mr. Fitzwarren, a merchant. Cicely, the cook, first saw him, and told him to go about his business. At this moment the merchant came home, and began to scold the boy for sitting at his door, and bid him go to



work : Whittington replied, that he would work, if any one would employ him, only for some victuals, for he had eaten nothing for three days, was a poor country lad, and nobody would give him work. He then endeavoured to get up, but was so weak that he fell down again ; this excited compassion in the merchant, and he ordered the footman to take him in, and give him meat and drink, and



let him help the cook to do any of her dirty work.

Whittington would have lived happily in this family, if he had not been bumped about by the cook; till Miss Patty, her master's daughter, took compassion on him, and made her use him more kindly. Mrs. Fitzwarren ordered a flock bed to be put up in the back garret for him, and such a number of rats and mice were in that room that he could get no rest. A gentleman was on a visit to his master, and gave Dick a penny; this he carefully put by, intending to lay it out in the first Cat that was to be sold: soon after this, he



saw one in a woman's arms, but she asked more than a penny for the cat; however Dick at last had the cat for for his penny, and puss drove away and destroyed all the vermin.

Mr. Fitzwarren having a ship ready to sail, called his servants, and proposed each sending a venture, to try their fortunes. All appeared but Dick; and his friend, Miss Patty, ordered him to be called, and offered to lay down some-

thing for him ; but Mr. Fitzwarren said it must be something of his own. I have nothing, said Dick, but a cat : Fetch the cat, my boy ? said the merchant, and send it.

Whittington delivered the cat with tears, saying, I shall now be devoured by the rats and mice.

While puss was beating the billows, Whittington was cruelly beaten at home by the cross cook, who made sport of him for sending his cat : at last the poor boy determined to run away.

He set out early in the morning of Allhallow's day : having got as far as Holloway, he sat down to rest on a stone, which is still called Whittington's stone, when Bow bells began ringing ; and he fancied they invited him to return, by saying, Turn, turn again Whittington, Lord Mayor of London ?

Lord Mayor of London ! said he to



himself; what should not one endure to arrive at the honour of riding in such a fine coach, with six horses; well, I'll go back to Cicely, rather than lose the pleasure of being Lord Mayor. So home he ran, before Cicely came down stairs.

The ship that carried out his cat, was very near being lost, and after contending with the boisterous seas, the sailors had the comfort to discover the



coast of Barbary; great was their joy at having escaped the dangers.

The captain returned Almighty God thanks for their wonderful preservation. The inhabitants received them kindly, the captain shewed them the patterns of his cargo, and the king invited the captain and the factor to dine at the palace.

Here they were seated on elegant chairs, and the floor covered with carpets, flowered with gold and silver.

The king and queen being seated at the upper end of the table, and dinner brought in a number of covered dishes, the moment the covers were



taken off, a large quantity of rats and mice jumped on the table, and devoured the whole. The factor, in surprise, turned to one of the nobles, and asked if the vermin were not offensive. O yes, said he, very; for they not only eat his food, but assault him in his chamber, so that a guard is obliged to be kept while their majesties sleep.

The captain recollected Dick's Cat, and told their majesties there was a

small creature on board his ship, that would despatch them presently. Let the creature be brought, said the king, and, if she drives the vermin from my court, I will, in exchange for her, load your ship with gold, and the richest jewels of my country.

The factor fetched puss, and as soon as she saw the vermin, she sprang out of his arms, and killed or drove away every rat and mouse from the room.

The king was astonished to see so small a creature drive away his old enemies, and the queen begged to have her brought near her. At first she was afraid of puss, but the captain stroked her; the goodnatured animal kept purring and singing, and the queen took the cat in her lap, where she presently sang herself to sleep.

The king bought all the merchandise the captain had in his ship, and

then paid him for the cat, which amounted to ten times as much money as the whole cargo.

The captain assured their majesties the cat was with young, so that it was likely she would stock the country.

It was that day twelvemonth, about the same time in the morning, on which Dick Whittington fancied Bow bells advised him to return, that Mr. Fitzwarren, who was an early riser, was sitting at his desk in the counting house, and heard a rap at the door: Who is there? said the merchant. A friend, answered the other; I have brought you good news of your ship Unicorn; the merchant then admitted the captain and factor. They presented him with the casket of jewels, which his cargo had fetched; then they shewed him the caskets of diamonds and rubies they had received

for Whittington's Cat, which surprised him beyond description, and he cried out,—

Go, call poor Dick, let's tell him of his fame ?
And Mr. Whittington shall be his name.

Dick endeavoured to excuse himself, saying, the floor was just rubbed, and his shoes were dirty and full of nails. The merchant however, ordered a chair to be set for him, and took him by the hand, and said, Mr. Whittington, I congratulate you on the surprising success of your Cat, she has produced you more riches than I am worth, and may you long enjoy them.

When they opened the casket, and shewed him the treasure, which they assured him was his own, he fell on his knees, and returned thanks to God for his goodness ; and then laid the whole at his master's feet, begging him to accept it: this Mr. Fitzwarren re-



fused, saying, he heartily rejoiced at his prosperity. He next applied to his mistress and Miss Patty, who refused taking the smallest part. Mr. Whittington rewarded the captain, factor, and the ship's crew, for the care they had taken of his cargo, and made presents to the servants, even to his old enemy the cook.

Mr. Fitzwarren advised Mr. Whit-

tington to send for tradesmen to dress him suitable to his fortune. He in a little time lost that sheepish behaviour occasioned by depression of spirits, and grew a sprightly companion. Miss Patty, who always viewed him with an eye of compassion, now looked on him in another light, which was probably occasioned by his readiness to oblige her. When the merchant discovered they had a great regard for each other, he proposed a match, to which both joyfully consented, and a day was fixed for the ceremony. They were esteemed the happiest couple in England, and lived to a good old age, leaving several children behind them.

Sir Richard was Sheriff of London in 1340, and was three times Mayor of London; and King Henry V. in Whittington's last mayoralty knighted him.

